UNITED
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ST

Secretariat

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INFORMATION CIRCULAR

To: Members of the staff

From: The Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management

Subject: MEMBERSHIP OF THE PANELS OF COUNSEL*

1. The panels of counsel, which exist at Headquarters, Geneva and Vienna, constitute an essential part of the internal system of administration of justice by providing information, advice and, where appropriate, representation before the Joint Appeals Board, Joint Disciplinary Committee, the Administrative Tribunal and elsewhere. The panels function independently of both staff and Administration so as to exercise a substantial measure of autonomy and self-regulation.

2. The role of the panels of counsel has been crucial to the successful implementation of the programme of reform of the internal system of administration of justice initiated in 1987. Members of the panels have diligently provided effective assistance to colleagues in many hundreds of cases before the boards, committees and Tribunal. In addition, the panels have settled a substantial number of cases amicably, thus avoiding formal litigation.

3. Members of the panels are current and retired staff members, preferably with administrative and legal experience, of all grades and drawn from every part of the Secretariat, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees who are willing to volunteer some of their time, knowledge and experience to assist colleagues with regard to problems related to their conditions of service under the Staff Rules, including assistance with correspondence related to such problems.

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* Personnel Manual index No. 11070.

4. Service as counsel is a generous expression of the ideals that motivate the international civil service and is recognized and supported by the Administration in that spirit. The panels are also fully supported by the staff.

5. To ensure that the internal justice system continues to function smoothly and effectively, it is essential to maintain an adequate membership of the panels of counsel. To this end, the Secretary-General intends to renew the membership of the panels of counsel and publish in the near future revised lists of members of the panels. I would like to urge staff members to volunteer for service in the panels of counsel. New counsel at Headquarters may obtain on-the-job training through a programme of seminars provided by the panel of counsel. On-the-job training may also be obtained by working as co-counsel with other experienced colleagues.

6. Staff members at Headquarters interested in membership should contact the Coordinator of the Panel at Headquarters in room DC2-404, extensions 3-3954 and 3-3957, by 28 June 1991. Staff members at Geneva should contact Mr. A. Galindo, Secretary, Joint Appeals Board, room 243-1, extensions 2256 or 3474. Staff members at Vienna should contact Mr. R. Paris-Steffens, Secretary, Joint Appeals Board, room E-1214, extension 4265. Staff members serving at other duty stations should contact the Coordinator of the Panel at Headquarters. Retired staff members interested in membership should likewise contact the above-mentioned officials, as appropriate.